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45. 234.







❖ The Snow  
or, the Lost  
Biddleston



Newcastle

IMPRINTED BY M. A. RICHARDSON

LONDON: J. R. SMITH, 4, OLD C

MDCCCXLV.



## Preface.

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"How found you him ?

Stark as you see :

"Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber."

CYMBELINE.

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THE month of December, 1837, in the north of England was unusually boisterous and stormy. The local records are filled with details of damage done by sea and land : of stranded ships—swollen rivers—bridges destroyed and roads flooded. On the twentieth day of that month, at half-past nine in the morning, little Edward Mennim, the son of a shepherd in the southern range of the Cheviot, was sent by his mother from Biddleston Edge, in the parish of Alwinton, Northumberland, to Biddleston, bearing some needful message to



her husband. The weather had improved—the distance was trifling—and the path well known to the little messenger, who was however, not much above six years old.—Proud of his office, he left his mother's door with a light heart, and was never more seen alive.

Almost immediately after his departure, the storm, which had only paused to “fetch breath,” as the seaman's phrase is, came down upon him with redoubled fury, bringing with it those two most awful visitations, a dense fog and a scudding snow,—visitations under which the stoutest quail, when occurring either on the ocean or among the hills. What our poor little laddie endured, is known only to Him who can temper the wind to the shorn lamb. But that his sufferings, mental and bodily, must have been great, is too certain. His corpse was found on the eighth of the following month, at Hockley Dean Law, six miles from his home, across a rugged and difficult country; yet with a smile on the lip, and colour in the cheek, as though he had “made his grave a bed.”

The narrator of such a story, whether in prose or verse, only requires a distinct enunciation, and this is all that I have aimed at in the following stanzas. The facts will plead for themselves. And if they can find a reader altogether unmoved by them, he must not be offended by my assuring him, that his critical

approbation or censure would  
to me.

Since the above was written  
a very kind and interesting  
gentleman who was resident  
hood of our scene of action,  
child was lost. The informant  
has added some stanzas to  
enriched it with the striking  
Dream and the Colley Dog.

Vicarage, Newcastle-on-Tyne  
Dec. 13., 1844.





## The Snow



“From Biddleston Edge to B

“It is nobbut half a mile;

‘And soon thou mayst be wit

“If thou cannily gang the

"The bletherin' blast has ceased to blaw,  
 "And the sun blinks out again;  
 "Thou canna weel miss the path, hinnie,  
 "I trow thou kens ilka stane.

"And thou wilt na' tarry—but wish thy feet  
 "Thou couldst gie for the wings o' the gled—  
 "For thou'lt think how 'twill gladden thy father's heart,  
 To welcome his winsome Ned!"

Then up and danced that bonnie wee bairn,  
 He capered upon the floor;—  
 For dearly he loved his daddie to seek,  
 Were it out on the open moor.

He loupit up on his mammie's knee,  
 And weel he bid her fare,  
 And he kissed her mou', and he kissed her cheek,—  
 —But he never kissed her mair!

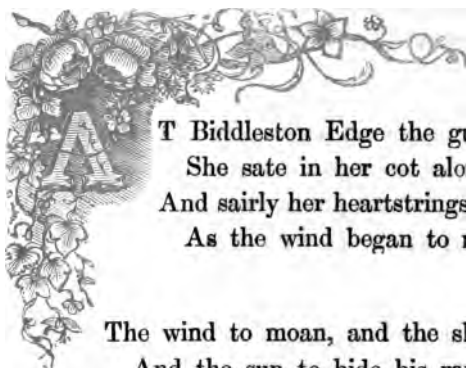
He bounded away from the cottage door,  
 And his bright e'en seemed to say,  
 As the firm snow crunched beneath his tread,  
 "I'm a happy lad the day!"

The storm for a wearifu' week had r  
 In those mountains wild and bleak,  
 And the voice of the torrents from ea  
 Of danger and death did speak.

Yet little reck'd he, that lonely child  
 But carolled out with glee—  
 For Biddleston Hall before him lay  
 Where he'd be at his father's knee

Where thou'lt be at thy father's knee  
 And taste a father's love?—  
 —Yes! thy Father indeed thou shalt n  
 Even Him who dwelleth above!





T Biddleston Edge the gudewife sat—  
 She sate in her cot alone,  
 And sairly her heartstrings began to ache,  
 As the wind began to moan.

The wind to moan, and the sky to lour,  
 And the sun to hide his ray!—  
 And Oh! waur than a', the black-palled fog  
 To bring night in noon of day!—

Down came the gloom from Simonside,  
 And Hedgehope and Linhope's fall—  
 Not a hill, or a torrent, or moss was there,  
 But aided to blacken the pall!—

“I mind me,” quo’ she, “o’ the glamorous dream,  
 “That mockit my sleep yestreen—  
 “And aye cam’ back, tho’ I strave fu’ fain,  
 “Wi’ mony a prayer atween.

❖ The Snow Shroud :  
or, the Lost Bairn o'  
Biddleston Edge.



Newcastle :

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LONDON : J. R. SMITH, 4, OLD COMPTON STREET.

MDCCCXLV.



“No harm!”—In a moment the tale is told,  
 And away on the wings of fear—  
 Away they hie them to Biddleston—  
 —But Neddie had not been there!

Alas! Alas! the crushing woe,  
 On the Parents’ hearts that fell,  
 And the harrying thought that rent their souls,  
 It is not for words to tell.



WAKE! awake! the country’s up!  
 There’s a bairn abroad i’ the storm!—  
 And from Farm, and Cottage, and Shep-  
 herd’s Hut,  
 The warm-soul’d seekers swarm.

Worn by the wearying storm they come,  
 From nigh—from distant parts—  
 —How say we that brotherly kindness  
 Is cold in Christian hearts?

Harbottle Castle and Biddleston Hall,  
 Their leal-hearted lords send out;  
 And the Pastor of Alwinton quitteth his hearth,  
 To quicken the dismal scout—

The Greys are not lacking,—but up and away  
 They urge the perilous quest:—  
 Oh! be the hearts happy that thus can feel,  
 And aye may their home be blest!

Each perilous pass of the mountain they try,  
 They grope in each dingle and dell—  
 Had the choicest and best of the flock been lost,  
 They never had searched so well—

And is't not a lamb frae the flock?—for see!  
 How the Colley dog tries the ground—  
 And circles, and wheels, and then springs to the scent,  
 With many a gladsome bound.

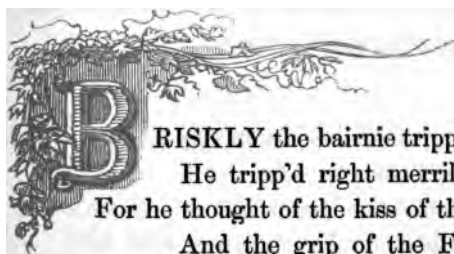
O Merciful Heaven! thy numberless gifts,  
 What thankful heart shall scan?—  
 'Tis Thine that the beastie comes in to aid  
 His baffled master, Man!—

And long did the faithful creature strive,  
And spared neither muscle nor breath—  
God's help to such hunting, and weel may it thrive,  
For 'tis to preserve from death!—

But fainter and fainter becomes the scent,  
As colder became the air—  
And see now!—Did ever the look of man  
More truthfully speak—Despair!—

For days and nights they scour the moor,  
For days and nights in vain—  
Each hour they follow some flattering hope,  
But to be foil'd again!—





RISKLY the bairnie tripp'd over the snow,  
 He tripp'd right merrilie,  
 For he thought of the kiss of the Father's mou',  
 And the grip of the Father's knee.

"I wunna turn back for the blashy storm,  
 "Or the wind sae strang and chill,  
 "For daddie will ca' me his ain brave lad,  
 "When I've dune my mither's will."

But what has come o'er the canny wee lad,  
 And what has come o'er his e'e?  
 For he peers, and he pokes, and he strives in vain,  
 Fair Biddleston Ha' to see!

He canna tell why,—for 'twas there but noo,  
 Yet see, it is a' clean gane!  
 He turn'd him about, and he grat—Wherefore no?  
 For is he not—all alane?—

Is he not all alane, poor Lad?—  
And how shall he find his way?  
For the cloud has come down like a deathsome pall  
Making night of the noon of day.

And the blustering wind begins to rise,  
And the baffling snow to drive;—  
Gramercy! for that poor lonely lad,  
And for those who would greet him alive!

Yet he still toil'd on thro' the thickening fog,  
The snow and the driving sleet—  
For he thought how his little heart would warm,  
His daddie dear to meet!

He still toil'd on—and 'tis passing strange,  
How limbs so soft and spare,  
From Biddleston Edge to Hockley Dean Law,  
The wretched babe could bear!

He clamb the craig,—he threaded the bog,  
He breastit the roaring flood;  
The shoon from his weary feet are torn,  
And his legs are trickling blood.

And, "Mammie, dearest!" the wan lad cried,  
 "I ken I shall surely dee,  
 "If I canna find my ain daddie,  
 "And give him the message fra' thee.

"The rugged craigs are sair to climb,  
 "And the bog is sair to thread;  
 "But waur than a' is this deathfu' pall  
 "That is settling round my head!"

Still looking to meet his ain daddie,  
 He struggled from woe to woe!  
 Till faint and heart broken—and starved with cold,  
 He sat him down in the Snow.

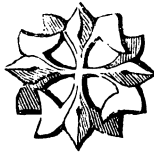
A calm came over his bursting heart,  
 A sweet and saintly calm—  
 And sleep stole over his weariness  
 With more than its wonted balm.

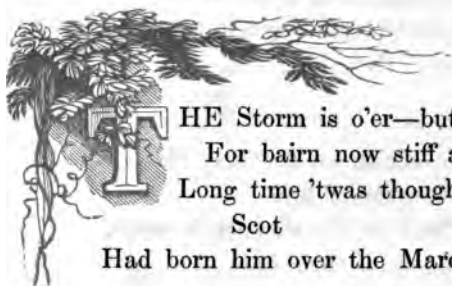
Yet still he thought of his dear daddie,  
 His mither, his cottage bed—  
 And smiled as though the blessings he heard,  
 Which they poured o'er his pillow'd head.

And as shrouded round in the snow he lay,  
To his failing sense were given  
Sweet soothing sounds—Was't the sough o' the wind?  
—Or the golden harps of Heaven!

For denizens fair of Heaven were there,  
From dark and stormy night,  
With willing ministry to bear  
The ransom'd soul to Light!

And up the heavenly treasure flew,  
And left its chill abode,  
To share for aye that sunshine glow,  
—The presence of its God!





THE Storm is o'er—but n  
 For bairn now stiff and  
 Long time 'twas thought  
 Scot  
 Had born him over the March.

But the Shepherds of Alwindale spread  
 There is na one missing, I ween—  
 And the men of the Breamish are out i'  
 —To meet in the wilds between.

Nor long the search—for the Colley agan  
 Has scented the tainted gale—  
 And they hurry to see on Blakehope M  
 What has garr'd him whine and wail.

And there with eyes upturned to Heaven  
 As though to scan the way  
 By which the pure enfranchised soul,  
 Had left the suffering clay,—



Eyes that the hungry Hawk had spared,  
 And the Raven but stoop'd to view—  
 Cheeks that the Robin had perch'd upon—  
 So like its breast their hue,

With this hue of health on the rosy cheek,  
 And a dimpled smile of joy,  
 They find, and bear to the shepherd's home,  
 What once had been their boy.

And weel may we wot of the Father's woe—  
 We may deem of the Mother's grief,  
 When all that they clasp'd of their bonnie bairn,  
 Was a corse so stark and stiff.—

But that happy bairn still lives, gude folk !  
 And this would his warning be—  
**"Your weary life is a winter's night—  
 God help you to follow me !"**







